4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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gingly of the elderly: "After becoming aged one's greed increases;" more sarcastic ones on the same theme are these: "As greed increases, the lifetime lessens," "As mist catches onto a peak, so her vilest characteristics catch hold of an old woman," and again, "Is it medicine for old age, like advice for a bad time?" This latter one refers to the belief that there is no further need for medicine when a person is old, just as a bad man is beyond need of advice. (The general world for all kinds of medicine, *maddu*, is used in this last proverb; it also means "magical potion," "opium" and "poison," however).

9.2. The general attitude towards adult women is not a charitable one: it is succinctly summed up in the saying, "The man knows the nature of others; his wife is an expert in cooking." In contrast to this, though, the status of women is never higher than in old age, and in a few cases old ladies have been members of the otherwise all-male village councils. The Lingayat Badagas in fact treat a post-menopausal woman as a man; but most Badagas do not, for if orthodox they still prohibit an old woman from eating or drinking in the inner and most sacred parts of the house. No ceremonies mark the occurrence of menopause; but Lingayat women are often given a *Linga* symbol to wear after it has occurred.

9.3. Older people have friends in their own village, but not elsewhere because of the difficulty they have in getting around. They select friends of equal age, and hence similar memories; but whether or not the friends are equally well-to-do seems unimportant. A pair of widows or else a pair of widowers are commonly good friends; and provided they are very old, even a widow and a widower can be close friends, treating each other as fictive brother and sister, without other villagers misinterpreting the relationship. Again, if they are extremely elderly, two men and their two wives may treat each other as *four* brothers. Then there is nothing scandalous about an old man sitting with the wife of his friend and talking to her for hours. In contrast with this, an old man with a young wife will not be particularly friendly with another old man whose wife is elderly.

9.4. It is believed that if a man wears gold his lifetime will lengthen. If on the other hand he sees two crows in the act of sexual congress, he will die within a year. An elderly man receives this information calmly; but a younger man will try to avoid his fate by counteracting the omen. This is done by going to a hill above a neighbouring hamlet, and shouting out to the villagers that he—mentioning himself by name—is dead. As he is careful that no one